

## **SCPT Practice Guideline #14**

### **Alternative Therapy/Dual Practice**

#### **Background**

Alternative therapies are becoming increasingly common as people seek additional forms of therapy and treatments for their health problems. Some physical therapists may be involved in one or more alternative therapies in addition to their practice of physical therapy and thus may become involved in dual practice.

An alternative therapy is a distinct and specialized body of knowledge and acquired skills that may be performed by a physical therapist, but which falls outside the recognized parameters of physical therapy practice in Saskatchewan.

Dual practice occurs when a physical therapist provides both physical therapy services and another non-physical therapy service to a client (i.e. chiropractic, massage therapy, occupational therapy, reiki, aromatherapy, etc.)

The SCPT Regulatory Bylaws govern alternative therapy or dual practice by members as follows:

#### **Alternative therapies**

22(1) Members who engage in the practice of physical therapy and who also provide other services to clients shall ensure that they do not hold themselves out as a physical therapist when providing those other services or refer to the provision of those other services as physical therapy treatment.

(2) A member shall ensure that clients and third-party payers, if involved, are fully informed of which service provided to them is a physical therapy service and which is not, and shall keep clear and separate records, including billings, of physical therapy services and alternative therapy services provided.

(3) For the purposes of this section, “practice of physical therapy” means the use by a physical therapist of their specific knowledge, skills and professional judgment to improve individuals’ functional independence and physical performance, manage physical impairments, disabilities and handicaps, and promote health and fitness.

The SCPT Code of Ethics provides:

5. Physical therapists shall confine themselves to clinical diagnosis and management in those aspects of physical therapy in which they have been educated and which the profession recognizes.

17. Physical therapists shall conduct themselves in such a manner as to merit the respect of the society for the profession and its members.

## Practice Guidelines

1. If a client comes to a physical therapist for physical therapy, then the physical therapist should use all efforts to treat the client with forms of physical therapy first.
2. In order to keep physical therapy and alternative therapies distinct and separate to clients, physical therapists should obtain a signed client consent form for the alternative therapy that incorporates the understanding that the alternative therapy is not a form of physical therapy and therefore falls outside the jurisdiction of the College.
3. Physical therapists should retain separate and distinct charts and accounts when utilizing their skills as a physical therapist and when utilizing skills of an alternative therapy.
4. When the treatment plan involves both physical therapy and an alternative therapy, the physical therapist should ensure that the client is informed of the following:
  - a) the differences between the act of physical therapy and the alternative therapy;
  - b) that the alternative therapy may not be regulated; and
  - c) that the client has the right to refuse any or all parts of an assessment or treatment regardless of the therapy.
5. The physical therapist should ensure that they report to the College on their annual licence renewal only those clinical practice hours accumulated in the provision of physical therapy services; hours spent in practice of an alternative therapy do not qualify for licensure requirements.
6. The physical therapist should ensure that his or her professional judgment and integrity are not compromised by motives of profit and should make it clear to the client which discipline is responsible for incurred costs, and whether the physical therapist has a vested interest in any products being sold (regardless of discipline).
7. The physical therapist should not bill for alternative therapy services under the title of "Physical Therapy".
8. Advertising and marketing of physical therapy services and an alternative therapy in the same advertisement, must, in addition to complying with any bylaws relating to advertising by members, be clear with respect to which services are physical therapy and which are not.